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ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND HELLENISTIC CULTURE:
THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL AND MILITARY
ACHIEVEMENTS UPON THE LIFE OF
THE MIND AND SPIRIT

by J. Harold Ellens

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Alexander the Great and Hellenistic Culture: The Impact of Political and Military Achievements upon the Life of the Mind and Spirit

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Introduction

Philip of Macedon was assassinated by Pausanias in 336 BCE. He left his son, Alexander the Great, a kingdom with at least five essential qualities for success. Alexander employed these resources with great effect for conquest and empire. First, Philip had built a solidly dependable and manageable organizational structure in the nation and the military. Second, pervading the kingdom was a broad and deep socio-economic stability based upon extensive military conquests on all the borders of Macedonia. Philip had extended the national territory, pacified his borders, and incorporated the subjugated peoples relatively congenially into the national political economy. Third, Philip was a model of regal character and command and that aura reigned throughout his domain. This was a rather remarkable thing among the

regencies of the day. Fourth, the military forces Alexander inherited were thoroughly schooled and experienced in the philosophy of command and staff operations, sophisticated strategy, and the tactical management of dynamic battlefields. These strategic and tactical operations would be canonized 2200 years later under Napoleon, by his Marshals Antoine Henri de Jomini¹ and Baron Carl von Clausewitz.² Fifth, Philip had prepared his son and successor with a superior education and with applied experience in philosophy, science, politics, social and economic management, military command, strategy, and tactics.

Exposition

Alexander was born in 356 BCE at Pella, Philip's Macedonia capital. He was tutored during his developmental years by Aristotle, who had participated extensively in Plato's Academy in Athens for twenty years, and subsequently established his own academies, first at Assus in Asia Minor and later on the Greek Island of Lesbos, before being hired by Philip of Macedon. Aristotle's father had served Philip's father as court physician. Aristotle was also born a Macedonian. After completing his work in Macedonia Aristotle spent the rest of his life at his Lyceum in Athens. He established it in 335 BCE and its influence has pervaded the entire world ever since. Thus Alexander the Great reached adulthood in the time and under the influence of the burgeoning Aristotelian sciences and philosophy. Behind Aristotelian science, of course, stood the great Greek scientific tradition of Thales, Heracleitus, Pythagoras, Asklepios, and Hippocrates, as well as the philosophical tradition of Socrates and Plato. Moreover Alexander was thoroughly schooled in the grand heroic epics of Homer. He greatly admired the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey*, and his spirit was formed and informed by them.³

¹ A. H. de Jomini, *The Art of War* (London: Greenhill, 1992).

² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, M. Howard and P. Paret eds. and transls. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

³ J. Keegan, *The Masks of Command* (New York: Viking, 1987) 22.

By conviction and conquest Alexander carried the virulent Greek tradition "to the ends of the earth", setting in motion the forces which produced the most powerful cultural movement ever to be spawned upon this planet, Hellenistic Civilization. It still reigns in every society and institution in the Western World and increasingly, in our day, everywhere else, as well. Alexander the Great carried Greek culture eastward into the Semitic world and Semitic religion in the form of Christianity subsequently and consequently swept westward across the Roman Empire, definitively shaping European thought and culture for all time. Christianity, itself an Oriental Semitic religion, was Europeanized in the process. The dynamics of that process are our particular interest. In the words of Frank W. Walbank, of the University of Liverpool, "Alexander the Great (Alexander III), king of Macedonia, overthrew the Persian Empire, carried Macedonian arms to India, and laid the foundations for the Hellenistic world of territorial kingdoms."⁴ That last phrase, "world of territorial kingdoms," is the key operative term for our entire study.

Unfortunately, the heritage Philip left Alexander was not wholly unambiguous. Philip was also a model of un-wisdom, in his poor judgment regarding the use of alcohol and the management of his relationships with women. These contributed to the untimely death of Philip and left Alexander inadequately chastened in these matters. This resulted, according to Arrian, in Alexander's drunken murder of his friend, Cleitus, who was reviling him while also intoxicated. The rumor that Alexander died in Babylon of alcohol poisoning after an excessive bout with drunkenness seems, however, thoroughly contradicted by Arrian's report, which he claims he took directly from the official diaries. Arrian asserts that Alexander developed a serious fever after an excursion on the Euphrates River. The fever lasted five days or so causing progressive weakness and finally death.⁵ Is it also possible, and

⁴ S.v. "Alexander III The Great," *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia*, 15th ed. Vol. 1 (Chicago: Benton & Benton, 1974) 468.

⁵ Flavius Arrianus, *The Life of Alexander the Great*, A. de Selincourt, transl. Penguin Classics (New York: Penguin, 1958) 134-6, 252-3.

perhaps likely, that he caught malaria in north India and subsequently died of one of its recurring episodes of fever and cardio-pulmonary distress? The record does show that he never regained his robust health after the India campaign. That is often associated with the wound he sustained there, but is it not also likely that the symptoms we know about fits the diagnosis of malaria?⁶

The Alexandrian University Cities and Cultures

When Alexander died in Babylon on 13 June 323 BCE, he had created a cultural network which stretched from the Adriatic Sea to the Indus River and from the northern boundaries of the Balkans to the Sahara Desert; from Lybia to India, from Kazakstan and the steppes of northern Asia to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. He had laid the foundations for three great Hellenistic Civilizations: Ptolemaic Egypt; The Seleucid Empire east from Syria to India, including initially about two thirds of Alexander's domain; and the Antigonid Empire of Greece, Macedonia, and Asia Minor. Each of these built major cities and created world famous libraries and university centers. These, in turn, promoted a burgeoning of philosophy, the natural and social sciences including notably psychology, humanistic studies of all kinds, a rich literary tradition, and profoundly productive linguistic and philological sciences. They also became the sources of new forms of religious thought and practice.⁷

Nearly everywhere Alexander campaigned he established such grand urban centers of culture and learning and his successors in the three Hellenistic

⁶ J. F. C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Alexander the Great* (New Brunswick: Da Capo, 1960) 142. This is a speculation I have harbored for a number of years and proposed in previous publications (see note 7 below) but never seen documented. Now I note that Fuller claimed this without reservation as early as 1960.

⁷ Cf. J. H. Ellens, *The Ancient Library of Alexandria and Early Christian Theological Development*, Occasional Papers 27 (Claremont: The Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, 1993; repr. 1995); and idem, "The Ancient Library of Alexandria: The West's Most Important Repository of Learning," *Bible Review* XIII/1 (February 1997) 18ff.

Empires followed his example. The Antigonids raised Athens and major cities in Asia Minor to international status. The Seleucids gave large land grants to the major urban centers and encouraged the growth of Babylon, Antioch, Pergamum, Palmyra, and the like. The Ptolemies in Egypt built Alexandria, the queen of all the cities which rose from Alexander's heritage. Each of these major cultural communities became the site of dynamic intellectual life, producing internationally famous learning centers and libraries. The most famous university and library in all Hellenistic culture from 308 BCE to 642 CE, nearly a thousand years, was Ptolemies' royal Museion and Serapion in Alexandria.⁸

Each of the three dynamic and distinctive Alexandrian Hellenistic civilizations flourished with cultural developments of every kind, in the mode of the grand philosophical and scientific traditions of Platonic and Aristotelian Greece. From them has flowed everything that is significant in the rich thought systems of the Western World as we know them today. From those refreshing and irrepressible springs have come our philosophy, science, literature, and religion. Crucial to this process are all those patterns and potentials in Alexander's conquests and empire which made him successful, indeed heroic, and gave rise to the Hellenistic World. At the center of those influences are the enigmatic but dynamic relationship between soldier and philosopher, between the forces of conquest and the fertility of the human mind, between the visions of empire and of culture building, between military strategy and humane aesthetics, between political imperatives and the intrigues of the psyche, between cross-cultural social connections and the creative transcendence of the human spirit, the reach for the divine.

Conquest: Style and Scope

Philip of Macedon watched his two older brothers jeopardize the empire of their father, Amyntas III. They failed to subdue insubordination to the central

⁸ Ibid.

government by a number of regional vassals. They neglected to punish the invasions launched into Macedonian territory by the Illyrians on the northwest frontier. They did not significantly chasten the crack army of the Greek city-state of Thebes which constantly threatened the borders on the south. Philip had spent his formative adolescent and young adult years as a hostage in Thebes where Epaminondas, "the most inventive tactician of all Greek generals until then," was commanding the best army in the Mediterranean region.⁹

When his brother, Perdiccas, was killed fighting the Illyrians in 359 BCE, Philip became king. "The Illyrians prepared to close in; the Paeonians were raiding from the north, and two claimants to the throne were supported by foreign powers. In this crisis Philip showed a good sense of priorities by buying off his dangerous neighbours and, with a treaty, ceding Amphipolis to Athens."¹⁰ This bought time to prepare the most superior army in the region, the one Alexander later took east across the Persian Empire to India.

The new weapons and tactics he developed served the Macedonians until the Romans came. This Macedonian panoply of armament was adopted by the Romans by 150 BCE. The weapons depended particularly upon the pike or sarissa, nearly half again as long as the Greek spear. This gave the infantry a decided advantage. Creative tactics included new formations and movements for squad, platoon, company, battalion, division, and theater army. At squad and platoon level a new infantry formation included the phalanx, composed of a front line of spear men carrying the sarissa and thus sheltering the ranks of foot soldiers. The flank and rear were guarded by swordsmen. Cavalry movements were improved by organization of the mounted units into closely controlled small troops within the larger brigades. This made it possible for their employment in detail or enmasse in a very maneuverable fashion on short order from a central command. Philip also

⁹ G. T. Griffith, s. v. "Philip II of Macedonia," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 14, 225ff.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 225.

developed the use of artillery as a mobile weapon employable both in siege and against massed infantry. Alexander subsequently employed these cavalry and artillery formations with enormous effect. Philip's development of coordinated employment of combined arms; infantry, artillery, and cavalry, was a new tactical concept and it served Alexander well.

Thus Philip developed the classic battlefield management tactics which Alexander employed so successfully and which were recovered in the modern era particularly by the generalship of Napoleon, and have been the standard throughout the world since 1812. In contrast to the lesser wisdom of Nimitz and Montgomery, MacArthur and Patton were so successful in prosecuting their roles in WW II because they employed with scientific precision the tactical designs of Philip of Macedon: surprise, mass, fire power, maneuver, single or double envelopment, flanking movement, feint, and exploitation of the successful offensive. Philip believed that normally an aggressive preemptive attack or unexpected political initiative was the best form of defense.

So Philip successfully invaded Paeonia in 358, then defeated the Illyrians decisively, and in 357 married Olympias a princess of Epirus who became the mother of Alexander. Thus Philip stabilized his western frontier. Then he took Amphipolis back from the Athenians stabilizing his eastern and southern frontier. In 356 he invaded Thrace and took its silver and gold fields. Exploiting civil war in Thessaly he entered Greece. In 353 through lack of reconnaissance he was defeated in Thessaly but the following year he made good on it forcing the Athenians to fortify a blocking position at Thermopylae. By negotiation and waiting six years he was given Thermopylae and in the meantime made president of the Thessalian League. Athens sued for peace in 348 and became Philip's ally. This set the stage for Philip to lead the united Greek alliance against the Persian Empire.

Demosthenes, arguing for Athenian democracy, opposed Philip. Isocrates supported him, perceiving the democratic ambitions driving Philip's intention

to stabilize the region by unification and liberate from the Persians the oppressed Greek cities in Asia Minor. Philip's response was to avoid assiduously invasion of Athens' immediate domain and to refrain carefully from interference in its democracy. He needed Athenian cooperation and he believed in democracy when and where it worked. "Philip himself organized the Greeks now to keep the peace with him and with each other and to support him in the Persian war overseas. In the constitutional details of his settlement of Greece he may well have had the help of Aristotle, free from his recent duties as tutor of the young Alexander."¹¹ This arrangement with all the Greek states except Sparta was certified in the League of Corinth in 337, an organization designed to preserve and perpetuate a general peace. The Greek states were cooperative. They remembered that his defeat of all the Greek armies fielded against him at Chaeronea in 338 was accomplished by skillful tactics and consummate generalship.

Philip understood and employed with great care the most important principle of war, namely, that strategic and tactical moves are never for killing enemy soldiers, but always for killing enemy strategy. Thus he used his own and the enemy's troops sparingly and with great efficiency coordinated diplomacy with military action. This was the philosophy and style of politics and war which he ceded to Alexander and it made his son great. "Philip had made Macedonia and now Macedonia and its kings made world history."¹² Keegan insightfully observes,

Alexander's management of those politics, like his command of strategy, mastery of logistics and skill in diplomacy, were to be the raw material of his epic. ... Brains he had, grace, charm, skill at arms, and more self-confidence than was usual even in one deliberately raised to believe in himself. Looks favoured him ... though not tall ... he had a habit of carrying his head and casting his eyes upwards and to the right, as if he were communing with some unseen presence. ... Looks, quality and character ... set him apart from the common man

¹¹ Ibid, 226.

¹² Ibid, 227.

as he stood poised ... to embark on his extraordinary life. Its sequence and pace not even he could guess."¹³

We see, therefore, that Alexander seized the reigns of empire just as Macedonia, in league with the Greeks, was poised to launch its invasion of Asia. It is likely that the motivation of both Philip and Alexander for this undertaking was less the desire to subdue Persia and more to secure the eastern frontier of what had become the Macedonian Empire, to expand the impact of its democratic political and cultural idealism, to increase its trade and revenue, and to enrich its cross-cultural fertilization. That this is true, may be seen from the fact that, like Philip, Alexander always preferred to co-opt an enemy rather than defeat him. A wonderful anecdote survives regarding Alexander's famous utterance to a general who urged him to attack Darius at Arbela at night. Alexander replied, "I do not steal victories (*ou klepto ten niken*)."¹⁴ Fuller tells us, Alexander found himself in a revolutionary age when some of the most astute minds in history were exploring new and innovative political models to rejuvenate the old city state polity which was withering in a kind of socio-political senility.¹⁵

Under Fire

Alexander's baptism in blood came in 340 when he defeated the Maedi, a Thracian people, while being left in charge of Macedonia during Philip's successful advance against Byzantium. Two years later he illustriously commanded the left wing in the Battle of Chaeronea, was apparently wounded in the battle, and was thereafter noted for his great personal courage. This was not the first occasion when those around him noticed Alexander's courage and brilliance. When he was sixteen he stood against the

¹³ *Masks of Command*, *ibid*.

¹⁴ Cf. Arrian III. 10.2 in I. Robson, transl., *Arrian: History of Alexander and Indica*, LCL, Vol. I (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929); Plutarch, *Alexander XXXI*, in B. Perrin, transl., *Parallel Lives*, LCL, Vol. VII (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959 [1919]).

¹⁵ *The Generalship of Alexander*, 264.

corral fence watching Philip and his staff trying to bridle and tame a wild horse with a very skittish personality. After a considerable time the men gave up. Alexander then declared to his father, "I can put a bridle on that horse and tame him." Thinking him brash and arrogant Philip laughed and told him condescendingly that if he could do it he could have the horse. Alexander walked up to the horse from the side opposite the sun, embraced the horse's neck, slipped on the bridle, and leaped upon his back. He rode him skillfully until the mustang settled down. He and the horse were fast friends from that day.

Alexander had observed, while watching the others struggle with the horse, that what made him skittish and wild was his fear of the shadows flitting over the ground while the men wrestled with him. Approaching the horse so as not to cast a shadow in the horse's view, the animal was calm and manageable. Alexander called the horse Bucephalus (ox-headed) and he rode him in every campaign all the way to India. There both Alexander and his horse were severely wounded in battle. Alexander gave the horse's name to a city, Bucephalia, he founded in India (near Jhelling, Pakistan, on the upper Indus) commemorating his faithful companion.

Alexander was able to succeed his father without opposition because the army universally acclaimed him. He immediately consolidated his gains by executing all those implicated in Philip's assassination, eliminating the entire faction which had opposed his ascent to the throne, marching south in a reconnaissance in force to assure the Greeks of his control, attending the meeting of the League of Corinth at which he was appointed Commander in Chief of Greco-Macedonian forces for the invasion of Asia, and returning by way of Delphi where the Pythian priestess pronounced him "invincible".

In 335 he marched across his borders on the east, northeast, north, northwest, and west to quell all turbulence among the Thracians, the Illyrians, and Thessians. Then he marched across the Danube to bring the Getae in line. When Demosthenes from Athens instigated a revolt in Thebes Alexander skillfully

conducted a forced march of 250 miles in 13 days from Pelion (modern Korce in Albania) to Thebes, made a forced entry into the city which refused to surrender, razed it to the ground except for its temples and Pindar's house, killed 6000 citizens, and sold the 30,000 survivors into slavery on the spot.¹⁶ The Greeks, and most everybody else before his conquering armies, got the message immediately. He garrisoned Corinth, Chalcis, and the citadel of Thebes, and proceeded forthwith upon the Persian expedition.

The Campaign East

The exploits of the 10,000 famed Greek soldiers of Xenophon's (431-350 BCE) *Anabasis* (401-400) had demonstrated the vulnerability of the Persians. This persuaded Alexander that with an skillfully commanded cavalry supporting his infantry he could defeat any Persian army. In the spring of 334 he left his father's faithful friend, Antipater, in command of 13,000 troops to hold Europe, and he crossed the Dardanelles with 40,000 foot, more than 5,000 cavalry, appropriate artillery, combat support, and combat service support troops.¹⁷ About 14,000 were Macedonians and 7,000 Greeks from the League. This army proved to be a remarkably balanced combination of arms throughout the campaign all the way to India. Darius, interestingly, had a field army three times the size of Alexander's. Moreover, it was supplied directly from quartermaster stores wisely emplaced throughout his country. He had no exposed lines of communication or supply.¹⁸ Combined with Darius' famed generalship, this made the Persians a formidable force to oppose from a foreign continent, across an ocean barrier, with extended and exposed supply lines.

In Alexander's forces, "Much work fell on the lightarmed Cretan and Macedonian archers, Thracians, and the Agrianian javelin men. But in pitched battle the striking force was the cavalry, and the core of the army,

¹⁶ *Masks of Command*, 23.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 24.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 28.

should the issue still remain undecided after the cavalry charge, was the infantry phalanx, 9,000 strong, armed with 13-foot spears and shields, and the 3,000 men of the royal battalions, the hypaspists (heavy cavalry). ... The army was accompanied by surveyors, engineers, architects, scientists, court officials, and historians; from the outset Alexander seems to have envisaged an unlimited operation."¹⁹

Alexander's second in command was Parmenio who had established a beachhead in Asia Minor already in Philip's lifetime. Alexander's first step upon crossing into Asia was a romantic gesture, a visit to Troy, inspired by his extensive knowledge of and infatuation with Homer. Then he broke the Persian line at the Granicus near the Sea of Marmara. Darius had employed Greek mercenaries against Alexander, most of whom were promptly massacred, 2000 being sent back to Macedonia in chains. This break-through opened up all of Asia Minor, prompting the major cities to open their gates to Alexander, fire their dictators, and install Greek-type democracies.

Alexander then made a typical political move which represented his style throughout his campaign and indicates one of the main points of this study. He "underlined his Panhellenic policy, already symbolized in the sending of 300 panoplies (sets of armour) taken at the Granicus as an offering dedicated to Athena at Athens by 'Alexander son of Philip and the Greeks (except Spartans) from the barbarians who inhabit Asia.' (This formula, cited by the Greek historian Arrian in his history of Alexander's campaigns, is noteworthy for its omission of any reference to Macedonia.)"²⁰ Clearly Alexander was thinking of himself and his cause in international, not parochial terms.

Alexander then proceeded through Phrygia, Caria, and Halicarnassus, which he had to storm. Significantly, Ada, the wife of the deposed ruler, Idreus,

¹⁹ Walbank, "Alexander III The Great," 469. Fuller lists historians, geographers, botanists, zoologists, metallurgists and other scientists, *The Generalship of Alexander*, 266.

²⁰ Ibid.

adopted Alexander as her son, expelled her brother Pixodarus from the territory, and was appointed ruler of the Satrapy by Alexander. This typified his style of political management of subdued territories. Fuller observes that this policy of conciliation was a carefully preplanned and intentional program, essential to his conquests and empire building. Alexander, the statesman, appreciated what too many politicians forget, namely, that the good will of the populace is the only moral basis for military pacification and sustained political power. He was equally effective on both fronts in war, the general's domain in combat fought with weapons, and the statesman domain in the psychological realm where ideas carry the day in the form of proper policy for the management of the enemy's people. Without effectively establishing the inner front Alexander would have been unable to progress eastward on the military front, with such a limited supply base and such extended lines of communication.²¹

This policy of conciliation was not confined to the Greek Asiatic cities. In Lydia, because Mithrines, the Persian garrison commander of Sardes, surrendered the city to him without a fight, he (Alexander) treated him with honour, and gave back to the Sardians and other Lydians the ancient laws they had been deprived of by Cyrus. It was at Sardes that Alexander's wisdom as a statesman is seen in a collateral problem. As he advanced, in order progressively to establish peaceful and contented areas in his rear it was essential that Persian administration should not be destroyed, and his appointment after his victory on the Granicus of Calas as satrap of Hellespontine-Phrygia shows that he intended to maintain it. ...But it must not be thought that he followed a uniform system of administration; he dealt with each city, district or province on its merits. ... In brief, as an administrator, Alexander built on what existed, reformed and experimented with it as far as time permitted, and did not adhere to any system that failed to stand the test of practice.²²

However, the curse of the existing Persian satrapal system was the consolidation of political, military, and economic power in the same regional authority, thus creating undue vulnerability to regional rebellions. Alexander split these responsibilities and usually placed the military and economic

²¹ Fuller, *The Generalship of Alexander*, 267.

²² *Ibid.*, 268.

controls under separate Macedonian commands. From the outset, moreover, the ideological aim of revenge for the insults done to the Greeks by the Persians was replaced by the strategic aim of security. Napoleon was impressed by the skill both of Alexander's generalship and statesmanship but what he said he particularly admired in Alexander was not so much his campaigns as his art of winning the affection of the people. Fuller remarks on this point that

Since war, other than mere brigandage, is a political act and an instrument of policy, statesmanship and generalship are near akin, and although usually the responsibilities of conducting a war are divided between a government and its general, or in recent times its general staff, in Alexander they were united, because as king of Macedon and hegemon of the Hellenic League he combined in his person complete political and military authority. He could elaborate his own policy and develop his strategy in accordance with it, and had it not been for the genius he displayed as a statesman in his conduct of war, under no conceivable circumstances could his generalship have accomplished what it did."²³

The Heart of Persia: Mesopotamia

From Halicarnassus Alexander proceeded south and east through Lycia and Pisidia, taking the coastal road to Perga, Gordium, Ancyra (Ankara), Cappadocia, and the Cilician Gates. In Cilicia he was delayed for some days by a fever. Darius, meanwhile, advanced east, north, and west circling Alexander and cutting his communication lines at Issus. Like Patton at Bastogne in 1945, against the German Winter Offensive known as the Battle of the Bulge, Alexander ordered a turning movement north and caught Darius by surprise, dispersed in an undefended bivouac along the Pinarus River. The Greco-Macedonian forces decisively defeated Darius' forces in a Persian rout in which Darius fled, leaving his family captives of Alexander. Typical of Alexander's style, the women and children were treated with chivalrous care as members of the court of the Macedonian emperor-general.

²³ Ibid., 264.

The Greek forces then marched into Syria and Phoenicia, isolating the Persian fleet from its home ports and eliminating it as an effective fighting force or source of supply .

The Phoenician cities Marathus and Aradus came over quietly, and Parmenio was sent ahead to secure Damascus and its rich booty which included Darius' war chest. In reply to a letter from Darius offering peace, Alexander replied arrogantly, recapitulating the historic wrongs of Greece and demanding unconditional surrender to himself as lord of Asia. After taking Byblos (modern Jubayl) and Sidon (Arabic Sayda), he met a check at Tyre, where he was refused entry into the island city. He thereupon prepared to use all methods of siege craft to take it, but the Tyrians resisted, holding out for seven months. In the meantime (winter 333-332) the Persians had counterattacked by land in Asia Minor—where they were defeated by Antigonos, the satrap of Greater Phrygia—and by sea, recapturing a number of cities and islands.²⁴

While the siege of Tyre was in progress, Darius sent a new offer: he would pay a huge ransom of 10,000 talents for his family and cede all his lands west of the Euphrates. 'I would accept,' Parmenio is reported to have said, 'were I Alexander'; 'I too,' was the famous retort, 'were I Parmenio.' The storming of Tyre in July 332 was Alexander's greatest military achievement; it was attended with great carnage and the sale of the women and children into slavery. Leaving Parmenio in Syria, Alexander advanced south without opposition until he reached Gaza on its high mount; there bitter resistance halted him for two months, and he sustained a serious shoulder wound during a sortie."²⁵

There is an intriguing notion in the literature that Alexander took the opportunity during this recuperation to visit Jerusalem, speaking at length with the religious leaders of Israel. This would be typical of Alexander's practice throughout his entire life as a general and emperor. However, Walbank asserts that there is no significant evidence for this.

Egypt gladly surrendered in November 332, welcoming Alexander as a deliverer. At Memphis he sacrificed to the Egyptian god, Apis the bull, encouraged the native religion and priesthood, was crowned with the double

²⁴ Ibid., 469-70.

²⁵ Ibid., 470.

crown of the Pharaohs, and spent the winter organizing Egypt. Typical of his style and method, he employed Egyptian governors, keeping the army under a separate Macedonian command. He identified the site for and founded the city of Alexandria at Lake Mareotis, on a western branch of the Nile in the delta. Here the harbor would be protected by the island of Pharos, subsequently famous for its lighthouse, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. He sent a scientific expedition to discover the reasons for the flooding of the Nile and himself undertook a religious pilgrimage to the shrine of Amon at Siwah, where he was declared the son of Amon. This led subsequently to his identification as the son of Zeus, and to his ultimate deification as the Son of God. At the shrine of Amon Alexander consulted the celebrated oracle regarding the success of his eastern expedition. Both he and the priests confirmed that he received a significant reply. Neither ever revealed what it was.

Having secured his right flank by controlling the entire eastern Mediterranean coast from the Adriatic to Lybia, he returned to Tyre in the Spring of 331, appointed a Macedonian Satrap for Syria and advanced into Mesopotamia in July. Alexander pushed straight across the Euphrates north of Babylon and advanced to the Tigris. There he drew Darius into battle, defeated his army, and exploited the victory by pursuing him 35 miles toward Babylon to the city of Arbela.²⁶ Darius escaped into Media with his cavalry and Alexander took Babylon, the city and the province. He reappointed Mazeus, the Persian governor who surrendered Babylon to him, as the satrap to run it for him. With Mazeus, as was Alexander's custom, he left a Macedonian troop commander. The local priesthood and religion were encouraged. Susa, Darius' capital, surrendered and offered 50,000 talents of gold, an enormous treasure, and here Alexander established Darius' family in luxurious comfort.

²⁶ E. S. Creasy, *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World* (Harrisburg: Military Service Publishing Company, 1957) 57-84.

Persia and Darius' Defeat, the End of the Beginning

Alexander marched over the Zagros range into Persia proper, successfully turning the Pass of the Persian Gates, and entered Persepolis and Pasargadae. At Persepolis he burned down the palace of Xerxes in a ceremonial celebration, indicating symbolically that the Panhellenic war of revenge was over. From this point on the expedition was Alexander's personal quest. In 330 he marched north into Media and occupied its capital Ecbatana. Then he sent the Thessalians and Greek allies home.

"As Mazaeus' appointment indicated, Alexander's views on the empire were changing. He had come to envisage a joint ruling people consisting of Macedonians and Persians. ... Before continuing his pursuit of Darius, who had retreated into Bactria, he assembled all the Persian treasure and entrusted it to Harpalus, who was to hold it at Ecbatana as chief treasurer. Parmenio was also left behind in Media to control communications" ²⁷ At this point in his campaign eastward Alexander faced a crisis. Until now he had been liberating provinces from Persian subjugation, reestablishing democratic process, and acquiring the allegiance of the citizenry by his programs of conciliation. Now, however, he was operating in the heart of Darius' own kingdom and among people whose allegiance would be difficult to distract from their emperor. So Alexander adopted a new political strategy. He appealed to the Satraps, indicating that their allegiance to Darius had been utterly discredited by his repeated defeat at the hands of Alexander's forces. Moreover, twice he had abandoned his army in the field and under fire, so he had forfeited his crown by his cowardice. It was clearly more profitable for the Satraps to shift their allegiance to Alexander and retain their own political status and domains. The idea was to "take advantage of the renown he had won and the degradation his victories had brought upon Darius," and so to abandon his initial policy of Macedonian

²⁷ Walbank, "Alexander III The Great," 470.

dominance, and instead to share his authority with his former enemies.²⁸ His appeal was to their self-interest. The strategy worked.

This was a decision of sheer genius, unique in the history of war. Many generals have deserted to their enemy, many have been bribed by him, and many have been cajoled into entering his service; none so far had or was again to be appointed by his victor, almost on the field of battle, his trusted subordinate, in order to establish the only possible condition which could lead to a profitable victory: an alliance between victor and vanquished—that is, a victory which would establish, at least in theory, a peace in which the noblest and the best of both would jointly rule. Thus a policy of partnership was to replace the policy of liberation, and as Alexander advanced, each satrap who ... surrendered without a fight, retained his satrapy, and for the time being Macedonians ceased to replace them.²⁹

In midyear 330 Alexander moved east at high speed through Tehran and the Caspian Gates. There he heard that Bessus, Satrap of Bactria, had deposed Darius and stabbed him to death. Alexander recovered the body and sent it for royal honors and burial to Persepolis where he ceremoniously retired it in the royal tombs.

Beyond the Persian Empire: East into the Unknown

Parmenio, meanwhile criticized Alexander's ongoing quest eastward and Parmenio's son was implicated in a threat on Alexander's life. He was tried by the army court and executed. Mean-while a messenger was secretly sent to Parmenio's second in command who obligingly assassinated Parmenio. Napoleon thought the assassination was appropriate because Parmenio was a "blockhead" who "considered it wrong to abandon Greek customs" and privilege, as Alexander moved further east, integrating the local people and their leaders into the structure of his expanding empire.³⁰ Alexander had learned that Aristotle was wrong to divide people into master and slave

²⁸ Fuller, *The Generalship of Alexander*, 270.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 271.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 267.

racers. He had learned from his father that military power is not the only, and perhaps not the most important, weapon wielded by an effective general.

Parmenio's death sent a sensation of horror through Alexander's subordinates but seems to have consolidated his control. He reorganized his command structure and moved swiftly further east. In 329 he was in Kabul, appointing all along the way, native rulers, democratic assemblies, and Macedonian troop commanders. He crossed the Hindu Kush at the 11,650 feet Khawak Pass. Ptolemy was sent to subdue Bessus in Bactria and Alexander completed the traverse of Afghanistan.

From Samarkand he advanced to the eastern boundary of the Persian Empire, breaking the opposition of the Scythians, pursuing them as far as modern St. Petersburg (Leningrad) and founded there the city of Alexandria Eschate, "the farthest". When Spitamenes raised all Sogdiana and the Massagetai against him in his rear, he crushed them in the autumn of 328 and continued east in 327 with 35,000 fighting men and a total company of 120,000.

India: Frontier of the Empire

Alexander divided his army for the invasion of India, sending half through the Khyber Pass under Hephaestion and Perdiccas. He took the other half himself on a more northerly route to the upper Indus river. He crossed the Indus in the spring of 326 and consolidating his force, sailed and marched down the Indus to its mouth. He fought as he went and received a severe wound in Hydraotes (Ravi). He never fully recovered from the persistent weakness and debilitation he acquired from this wound and the India campaign. At the mouth of the Indus he built docks and 150 ships. He sent the navy back to Mesopotamia while he marched the army overland.

The return march was precarious and many casualties resulted from climate, terrain, and food shortage. He had difficulties in his efforts periodically to

connect with the flotilla under Nearchus, which, in the original plan, was to keep pace with the army in its march from the mouth of the Indus to the mouth of the Tigris. His generalship may have suffered somewhat on this retrograde action because the challenging military objectives were now in the past and his health was precarious and painful.

Socio-political Development: An Ancient Marshal Plan.

By the spring of 324 Alexander had returned to Susa in Mesopotamia, having reorganized the empire and having replaced unworthy Satraps along the way. To further his policy of creating one superior community by fusing the Macedonians and Persians, he and 80 of his officers married Persian wives. He and his close friend, Hephaestion, one of his generals, married Darius' daughters Basine and Drypetis, respectively. Ten thousand of his soldiers were given generous dowries upon taking native wives in Mesopotamia. His determination to incorporate native people into the army and political administration throughout the empire, on equal terms with the Macedonians, caused the latter much unrest. Alexander proposed to send home the Macedonians who disagreed with him but they saw this, probably correctly, as a move to transfer to Asia the seat of the power of the Greco-Macedonian empire. They objected. He, therefore, fired the entire army and enrolled Persians. The opposition immediately broke down.

Alexander thus set the course for his political, military, and social organization of the empire. His plan had twelve significant features. He determined to eliminate racial dissonance and cultivate openness in all communities and institutions so that anyone could flourish and achieve, strictly on the basis of talent. He set out to expand public works projects and thereby promote employment, productivity, and improved health in all the local communities. He undertook irrigation projects in the Tigris and Euphrates basin. He established a system of laws and enforcement officers through-out the empire for the suppression of wandering mercenaries, and the repression of bandits, pirates, thieves, and disturbers of the peace. He

established embassies with the Libyans, Etruscans, Bruttians, Celts, Iberians, Romans, Carthaginians, Lucanians, the principates of India, and others on the boundaries of the empire. He vigorously pressed for the restoration of exiles to their native lands and prisoners of war to their families. Maintenance of democratic process wherever possible, under his Satraps and his central control, was a high priority. He invested heavily in the settlement of the Persian Gulf coast, creating extensive port facilities for the establishment and maintenance of a sea link with India. To foster this trade he developed extensive harbor facilities at Babylon and Patala, improved the maritime facilities at Clazomenae and Erythrae, and proposed a "new Phoenicia" on the coast of the Persian Gulf with skilled and sophisticated colonists imported from Carthage.

Having finished the conquest and returned to what he apparently intended to become his headquarters and capital city, Alexander's interest turned to scientific exploration and management of the empire for the benefit of his subjects. Alexander sent scientific expeditions throughout the empire in almost every scientific discipline. Their mandate was to study the natural phenomena, philosophy, religion, social organization, and mythic lore. He undertook to explore the Caspian Sea, the Arabian Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the coast line of the Arabian Peninsula. Even during the campaign to the east "... Alexander had with him bematists, or surveyors, who presumably collected information on routes, economic resources, and camping grounds as well as measuring distances in the previously almost unknown, unmapped, semi-mythological countries that the army traversed."³¹

³¹ M. von Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) 30 and W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, Vols. I-II (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976) Vol. I, 12-13 and Vol. II, 39.

Money: Lubricant for the Machinery of Empire

When he returned to Susa, Alexander had in hand the 50,000 talents of Darius' treasury, the 50,000 talents which the city of Babylon offered him at its capitulation, and at least another 100,000 talents acquired from interest and taxation. From Susa, Persepolis, and Pasargadae alone he had seized 186,000 talents (\$200,000,000) and entrusted it to Harpalus. Harpalus was the imperial treasurer and used these resources to build ships and acquire supplies for the army, in support of Alexander's march from Persia to India and back, absconding in the end with 5,000 talents and meeting his death by assassination for it. Alexander chose not to hoard this imperial treasure and instead created a banking system into which he floated the gold and silver in the form of minted coins. He reconciled the coinage of Persia with that of Athens, on the standard of the latter. Distributing the money throughout the Satrapies he empowered an enormous universal trade, banking, and credit system which had a uniform exchange medium and rate from Siberia to the Persian Gulf and from Libya to the Indus River. Scholars of Alexander's life and work agree that of all the services he gave to the world, the arrangement of a plentiful and well regulated monetary and fiscal supply was the most important. That gave the Hellenistic civilization a material prosperity which the Greeks never enjoyed on their own in their city-states.

To establish a uniform currency, he reconciled 'the decimal coinage of Persia (1 gold daric = 20 silver sigoli) with the duodecimal of Philip II (1 gold stater, Attic standard = 24 silver drachmae, Phoenician standard)' by adopting the Attic standard and then reverting to a silver monometallism, 'thus making the stater = 20 silver drachmae, which, though lighter than sigoli, were accepted in Asia. He thus refrained from competing with Athens' coinage ... but he demonetized the Persian gold, for as the hoarded treasures of Darius began to circulate gold fell below Philip's basic ratio, and the daric became bullion.' This uniform coinage powerfully stimulated trade, and ... in a short time Alexander's new tetradrachm was to have 'the highest value in the currencies of the world.'³²

³² Fuller, *The Generalship of Alexander*, 274 (quoting Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, Vol. I, 129 - 255).

In the organization of his empire, Alexander had been content in many spheres to improvise and adapt what he found. His financial policy is an exception; ... he set up a central organization with collectors perhaps independent of the local satraps. ... The establishment of a new coinage with a silver standard based on that of Athens in place of the old bimetallic system current both in Macedonia and in Persia helped trade everywhere and, combined with the release of vast amounts of bullion from the Persian treasuries, gave a much-needed infusion into the economy of the entire Mediterranean basin and communities in the east.³³

This "Marshal Plan" put Alexander's former enemies sturdily on their feet economically and politically, thus serving his own interests, as well.

Intellectual and Spiritual Factors.

In the end, however, Alexander's greatest achievement was the creation of a new concept of the world, of which his fiscal reorganization was a key part.³⁴ He had started his campaign with the objective of liberating the Greek cities of Asia Minor from Persian subjugation, under which they had labored since Cyrus the Great. He also determined to terminate Persian depredation of mainland Greece. This drew him into the invasion of Persia itself and the incorporation of that empire into his own in order to establish the security of his eastern frontier. He knew that the Greek homelands would never be safe until both flanks of the Aegean were firmly under Greek control.³⁵ He succeeded in this by developing another new objective, namely, co-opting the people of Asia Minor and the Satraps of Persia by his policies of conciliation and integration.

As his domain expanded it became more complex and multi-cultural and his policy matured into a vision of integrated societies in a socio-political structure of mutual support and local freedom. His uniform currency and

³³ Walbank, "Alexander III The Great," 472.

³⁴ J. P. Mahaffy, *The Empire of Alexander the Great* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1995) 40; see also on the generalship of Alexander, *ibid.*, 272-276. [Originally published in 1898.]

³⁵ Fuller, *The Generalship of Alexander*, 266.

banking system reinforced and empowered both that mutual support and that regional initiative, enormously enhancing artisanship, productivity, and trade. A policy of partnership replaced that of mere conciliation, and it in turn matured into a vision of integrated democratic empire. Fuller summarizes, "... when at the age of twenty the dagger of an assassin raised him to the throne, he stepped out along a path of his own choice, and began to develop a grand strategy—the product of statecraft and warcraft—which was to transcend the teachings of his master, eclipse the remarkable successes of his father, and set the civilized world spinning on a new political axis, undreamt of by the philosophers."³⁶

This new world had within it all the virtues and risks of any new experiment in democratic socio-political development. It was both comprehensive and complex. It was genuinely united but enormously diverse. The empire was diffuse and vast, affording room for great variety but also for considerable dissonance. Compared with the familiar parochialism, simplicity, and relative naiveté of the earlier Athenian city-state, this new world was dynamic with the potential for maximum cross-fertilization, maximum ferment, and considerable instability. It was a stage for great growth in every human way, but also for disunity, and even the potential alienation which might be incited by Satraps from the distant marches of the empire, impelled by private ambitions, short-sightedness, pinched and niggardly visions of personal power, and poor judgment regarding the well-being of the commonwealth.

This was the inevitable price that had to be paid for the new world in which old traditions had been broken, old boundaries and prejudices were transcended, old assumptions were forever irrelevant. These were all replaced by novel ways of seeing the familiar and stimulating new forms of unfamiliar ideas, things, people, and experiences. Because Alexander was riding such a bucking bronco, it may well have been providential that he died

³⁶ Ibid., 264.

just when he did. Had he lived to rule the vast new world, he may have been tempted toward autocracy as he wrestled with the inevitable turbulence of so extensive and untried an open society.

The heartbeat of Alexander's new world was surely the irrepressible stimulation it afforded the human quest for intellectual truth and spiritual meaning. The grand campaign of conquest had a remarkable effect upon the life of the mind and the spirit. It brought the full panoply of Greek ideas to the whole world of Europe and much of Asia. Likewise, it brought all the world's ideas and skills to the Greeks. The driving force in Greek ideas at the time was the empirical, explorative, and open-ended models of Aristotelian science and Platonic metaphysics.

Alexander's conquest resulted in the establishment of universities and libraries in all the major quadrants of the empire. This produced a burgeoning of focused intellectual power and stimulated an enormous scientific expansion, of which the great university and library at Alexandria in Egypt is only the most famous among numerous such illustrious institutions and centers of learning. The Greeks and Macedonians, in turn, received an entirely new, and for them surprising, sense of the universal nature of humanness, over against the pinched and niggardly thinking of their former master race model. In the process, the political models of the entire world of Alexander moved from the polis and city-state to the megalopolis, from ethnic nation-states to integrated international empire. Division of labor and diversification of skills became the ideal and stability the sought after longing of nearly all the citizenry.

It is generally understood that the incredible new world of Hellenistic Civilization which Alexander's conquests and empire building produced, became the well spring of the Renaissance in Europe during the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. It is also clear how that led to the Age of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. An intriguing question about the world of Alexander has to do with how close it came to the Industrial

Revolution in its own time, or what it would have taken to push it on from Aristotelian empiricism to modern science. The Greeks had a primitive atomic theory, a heliocentric universe, a vast understanding of astronomy. The scientists at the ancient university and library at Alexandria developed the full range of research creativity in the humanities and laid the foundations for the social sciences. They established the modern natural sciences of geodetics, geometry, geography, physics, engineering, architecture, astronomy, cartography, a primitive alchemical chemistry, medicine, psychology, and numerous others.

They understood how to use steam for power, the lever and screw for engineering, scientific applications for siege machines and artillery, and magnifying glasses for minute investigations. What kept them from building telescopes and microscopes? What prevented them from harnessing steam as a substitute for muscle power? What made it possible for them to achieve so much in physics and so little in chemistry? Why did they not come to understand the molecule of H_2O and go on from there to sophisticated chemicals? The answer may lie in the fact that with the rise of the Roman Empire two centuries after Alexander, the general international turbulence seems to have brought with it a shift from Aristotelian empirical science to a preoccupation with Platonic religious and metaphysical speculation. The mystery religions of the Eastern territories, Egypt, Greece, and Rome flourished then and careful exact scientific investigation was replaced with theological and philosophical pursuits. The focus of intellectual and spiritual energy shifted from cause-effect issues which could be empirical quantified and controlled, to meaning and purpose questions which always have some quality of rational idealism and hypothetical ideation. It amounted to a shift from empirical science to speculative faith, from the world of the mind to the visions of the heart.

This too was a product of the virtues and risks of Alexander's vast empire. Alexander promoted freedom of religion and affirmed the local deities and priests wherever he went. King Asoka sent Buddhist missionaries from India

to the Mediterranean lands already in the third century BCE. By the second century temples of the Greco-Egyptian god, Serapis, were established in Athens, Rhodes, Delos, and Orchomenos in Boetia. The Egyptian cult of Isis flourished as a popular religion throughout the Hellenistic World. Mithraism, the Persian religion with roots in Hinduism spread throughout the empire and, with the rise of Rome, became the chief competitor to Christianity in the Roman army and empire.

As a political instrument polytheism is superior to monotheism. While the latter acknowledges but one god, and repudiates all other gods, and is therefore a non-co-operative and aggressive religion, the former enables its adherents to find counterparts of its own gods in the enemy's gods, and consequently, should they desire to do so to enter into alliance with them. Because of this, at Tyre, at Memphis and at Babylon, Alexander was able without hypocrisy to sacrifice to the local gods, an enormous political advantage. Had he been a Christian or a Moslem, probably he would have destroyed the idols and thereby insulted their worshippers (sic). To him an ideological religious war would have seemed blasphemy.³⁷

It is enormously interesting that during the Hellenistic era Judaism also flourished as a virtual polytheism, developing a great variety of theologies about intermediary and quasi-divine figures. Such general traditions of Judaism can be traced along the trajectories of this rich and variegated stream. Zadokite Judaism was not altogether lost in this period. Enochian Judaism dominated the scene with its various differentiating flows toward Urban Essenism, Qumran Essenism, and the Jesus Movement. Pharisaic Judaism and Sadducean Judaism seem to have flourished together as well, and the former may have been the source of Rabbinic Judaism from the second or third centuries CE. In many urban centers, such as Alexandria in Egypt, Judaism, Emperor worship, the mystery religions, Paganism or the old Roman religions, and Christianity all competed for the dominant role. In the midst of all of this such figures as Philo Judaeus arose in the traditions of Greek philosophy and Hebrew religion and called for a refined and

³⁷ Ibid., 269.

rationalized monotheism. The world was rich with its pursuit of the hungers and habits of the heart.

The great Alexandrian cities became the fabulous urban centers of the ferment and dynamism of commerce, learning, art, science, and religion. New forums, markets, trades, and emporiums grew up. New rituals, liturgies, sacraments, and sacred spaces were created.³⁸ From the Egyptian cult of Apis the bull came the idea of eating god's flesh and drinking his blood. Another Egyptian tradition about the attributes of god hypostasized as a person brought the notion of the god-man. From the ancient Roman idea of the heroic Sacer or savior who sacrifices his security in the body politic for the sake of performing an expiation for some affliction of the people, combined with the Hebrew concept of atonement, came the doctrine of a suffering divine servant and a juridical satisfaction achieved by the death of the divine man. The Sacer of ancient Rome was he who defied the laws and established customs by removing the *lapis nigre* from the city square. This was a declaration that he took upon himself, on behalf of the people, a defiance of the established laws or tradition which were unwholesome for the people. Thus he made himself one who stood outside the law so he could take upon himself the cost of challenging the law and so deflecting the affliction of the people upon himself and delivering them by satisfying the law or forcing a change in it. The Christian tradition of the suffering servant and the Pauline notions of atonement and expiation are interesting in this context and surely related to these ancient archetypal notions.

So the life of the mind and spirit were surprisingly excited and enriched by Alexander's conquests. The categories and traditions of Greek philosophy were infused with fertile ideas from Persia, India, Egypt, Asia Minor and the Fertile Crescent. The scope and perspective of formerly alien cultures gave new meaning to each other, broadening the concepts and applications of the giver and receiver. In the process the right brain function of art, linguistics,

³⁸ P. Green, *Alexander to Actium, The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) 155-70.

philosophy, and religion came to realize equal play with and ultimately dominance over the left brain interests of the hard sciences.

Conclusion

Few would contest the notion that Alexander was the greatest general the world has seen. His versatility in the employment of combined arms and imaginative tactics were equally effective against all the standard and novel forms of warfare employed against him by the Persians, the Saka nomads, the India hill tribes, or Porus with his elephants.

His strategy was skillful and imaginative, and he knew how to exploit the chances that arise in every battle and may be decisive for victory or defeat; he also drew the last advantage from victory by relentless pursuit. His use of cavalry was so effective that he rarely had to fall back upon his infantry to deliver the crushing blow.

Alexander's short reign marks a decisive moment in the history of Europe and Asia. His expedition and his own personal interest in scientific investigation brought many advances in the knowledge of geography and natural history. His career led to the moving of the great centres of civilization eastward and initiated the new age of the Greek territorial monarchies; it spread Hellenism in a vast colonizing wave throughout the Near East and created, if not politically, at least economically and culturally, a single world stretching from Gibraltar to the Punjab, open to trade and social intercourse and with a considerable overlay of common civilization and the Greek koine as a *lingua franca*. It is not untrue to say that the Roman Empire, the spread of Christianity as a world religion, and the long centuries of Byzantium were all in some degree the fruits of Alexander's achievement.³⁹

The lasting effects of Alexander's conquests upon culture, society, and the life of the mind and the spirit are everywhere evident with us all the time. In Iran, the region of ancient Persia, Alexander's presence is evident in the persistence of such terms as Kandahar (Qandahar in Afghanistan), an Iranian form of the emperor's name. Likewise in India, an elaborate tradition about Iskhandar (Alexander) persists from ancient times. These are just two

³⁹ Walbank, "Alexander III The Great," 473.

examples of a pattern which formed and survives in the wake of Alexander's passing through all regions from Siberia to the mouth of the Indus and from India to Gibraltar. Names of cities and provinces, myths of heroic figures, religio-philosophical traditions, popular given names all reflect the awesome cultural memories of a god-like man, larger than life, who brought a beneficent new way of life wherever he went.

These artifacts of Alexander's campaign in the east warrant a separate study in themselves. Qandahar, for example, is the name of the capital city of the province of the same designation in Afghanistan. It was founded by Alexander and named after him. It has been successively the capital for numerous regimes of numerous Central Asian People ever since, was seized by the Arabs in the seventh century, by the Saffairds in the ninth century, and by the Ghaznavids in the tenth. The Mongols destroyed the city under Genghis Khan, as did the Turkic conqueror, Tamerlane. In the sixteenth century it was held by the Mughals, sacked by the Persian Nader Shah in 1738, and later rebuilt by Ahmad Shah Durrani to become the capital of a unified Afghanistan in 1747.

Iskandar is a name which survives in the Turkish name, Iskenderun, formerly Alexandretta. This is a seaport town and administrative center in southern Turkey, on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Iskenderun. Nearby stands the city of Alexandria ad Issum, commemorating the defeat of Darius at Issus in 333 BCE. Both are lovely modern cities which serve the present day trade routes from India and Iran, as they were designed by Alexander to do. Even in the ancient and medieval history of Thailand, Sumatra, and throughout what we know as Southeast Asia, this form of Alexander's name survives, particularly among the Islamic communities.

It was only a very short time, hardly more than a decade, between Alexander's illumination at the shrine of Amon in Egypt and his return from India to Mesopotamia; but he had come a very long way in that brief span. Militarily he had conquered most of the known world. Culturally he had

inspired a veritable tidal wave of new motivation. Financially he had empowered his entire world. Socially he had broken away national boundaries and biases which had held entire countries in the paranoia of xenophobia, afraid of the unknown expanses and peoples beyond their immediate borders. Politically he had demonstrated the possibility of shared power between disparate communities and persons. Psychologically he had opened the world to formerly unimaginable and unknown possibilities of human quest and meaning. Spiritually he had proven that the hunger of the heart for transcendence and for God is universal—and at its ground and root, the same hunger and habit everywhere for all.

Plutarch made a great deal of the illumination at the shrine of Amon in interpreting the driving force behind all these achievements. He tells us that after Alexander's visit at the shrine and his experience of the message from the oracle, he frequently spoke of having experienced an enlightenment like St. Paul's on the Damascus road. Paul saw the world in a new light and realized that "in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian or Scythian, slave or freeman, but all are one in Christ."⁴⁰ So Alexander's spiritual rebirth produced a vision, as he explained in his conversation with the Psammon, the philosopher, in which it was clear that God is not only the ruler of humankind but the common father of us all. Therefore we are all brothers and sisters. Consequently Homonoia, "being of one mind together" is the divine design for human society. This is the adhesive of family, state, and empire unity and peace.

Alexander saw himself called to the divine role of being the human fatherly regent of diverse peoples, on behalf of the deity. This is the vision that shaped his prayer at Opis and his policy of fusion and fraternity for persons and nation states within his empire. He had a divine mission to create harmony and reconciliation to the world. Plutarch suggests that it was to remain a dream but, nonetheless, a vision greater than all his conquests. He

⁴⁰ Gal 3:28 and Col 3:11.

believed that he was sent as a governor and mediator for the world. Those whom he could not persuade to take up this vision he subdued and brought into line. Those who were open to his mission he welcomed and honored. Plutarch claims to be employing Aristobulus' or Eratosthenes' term when he says that Alexander united and mixed all these in one great loving-cup, as it were: the lives, characters, relationships, and habits of life of all in his domain.⁴¹

⁴¹ Plutarch, *Moralia*, in F. C. Babbitt, transl., LCL, Vol. IV (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962 [1936]). Cf. also Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, Vol. VII, or, J. Dryden transl., *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, B. A. Cerf and D. S. Klopfer, eds. (New York: Modern Library, 1955).

Twentieth Century Relevance: IAC Hellenistic Studies Program

We are direct benefactors of Alexander's vision and accomplishments in a concretely practical way here at the IAC. A new master's degree program has been proposed for CGU in the history and literature of the Hellenistic period, defined as that period that began in the fourth century BCE when Alexander the Great carried Greek culture eastward into the Semitic world and ended in the fourth century CE when Christianity, a religion of Semitic origin, completed its westward sweep across the Roman Empire. The proposal includes the ambition to endow a chair for a faculty position in Hellenistic Studies.

Until the end of World War II, the study of antiquity, in which German scholarship was dominant, made a radical—and false—distinction between West and East. For this tradition of scholarship, Greece was rationality; the logical rigor of Greek philosophy, the sublime calm of Greek art; while Rome was virility: the military discipline of the legionnaires and the engineering valor of the road-builders. East of the Aegean, all was irrationality and femininity, the realm of bizarre cults, indulgence of the appetites, and indecent luxury.

In more recent years, the artificiality, not to say the ideological bias, of this dichotomy has become increasingly evident. A new recognition has emerged that traffic between West and East was not just occasional but massive and that our civilization is not descended from the West as opposed to the East but precisely from the fusion of the two. And yet, though this revision is widely accepted, academic categories still do not reflect it.

Our program proposes to be the first to do so. In our own multi-cultural era, the clash and fusion of cultures that occurred in the Hellenistic era has an obvious relevance. Initially, our graduates will proceed to doctoral programs in ancient history, classics, religious or biblical or near eastern studies.

Eventually, we hope that our master's program will mature into a new doctoral program in which every classicist will be something of an orientalist, and every orientalist something of a classicist. Our students have always been encouraged to find links between the field in which they are formally pursuing a degree and other fields represented at the School. In the spirit and heritage of Alexander the Great, Hellenistic Studies, a discipline that will come into being by the interdisciplinary crossing of significant academic boundaries, will be ideally suited to launch a degree program in this new field.⁴² We should do this now, for Alexander is reported to have said that it is a lovely thing to live with courage and to die leaving an everlasting fame.

⁴² Cf. in this regard, F. E. Peters, *The Harvest of Hellenism: A History of the Near East from Alexander the Great to the Triumph of Christianity* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970); E. R. Bevan, s. v. "Hellenism," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed. Vol. 13 (New York: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1910) 236-46; M. Cary, s.v. "Hellenism," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., Vol. 11, 403-8; J. Z. Smith, s. v. "Hellenistic Religions," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., Vol. 8, 749-51; and P. W. Pestman, s. v. "Hellenistic Law," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *ibid.*, 746-48.

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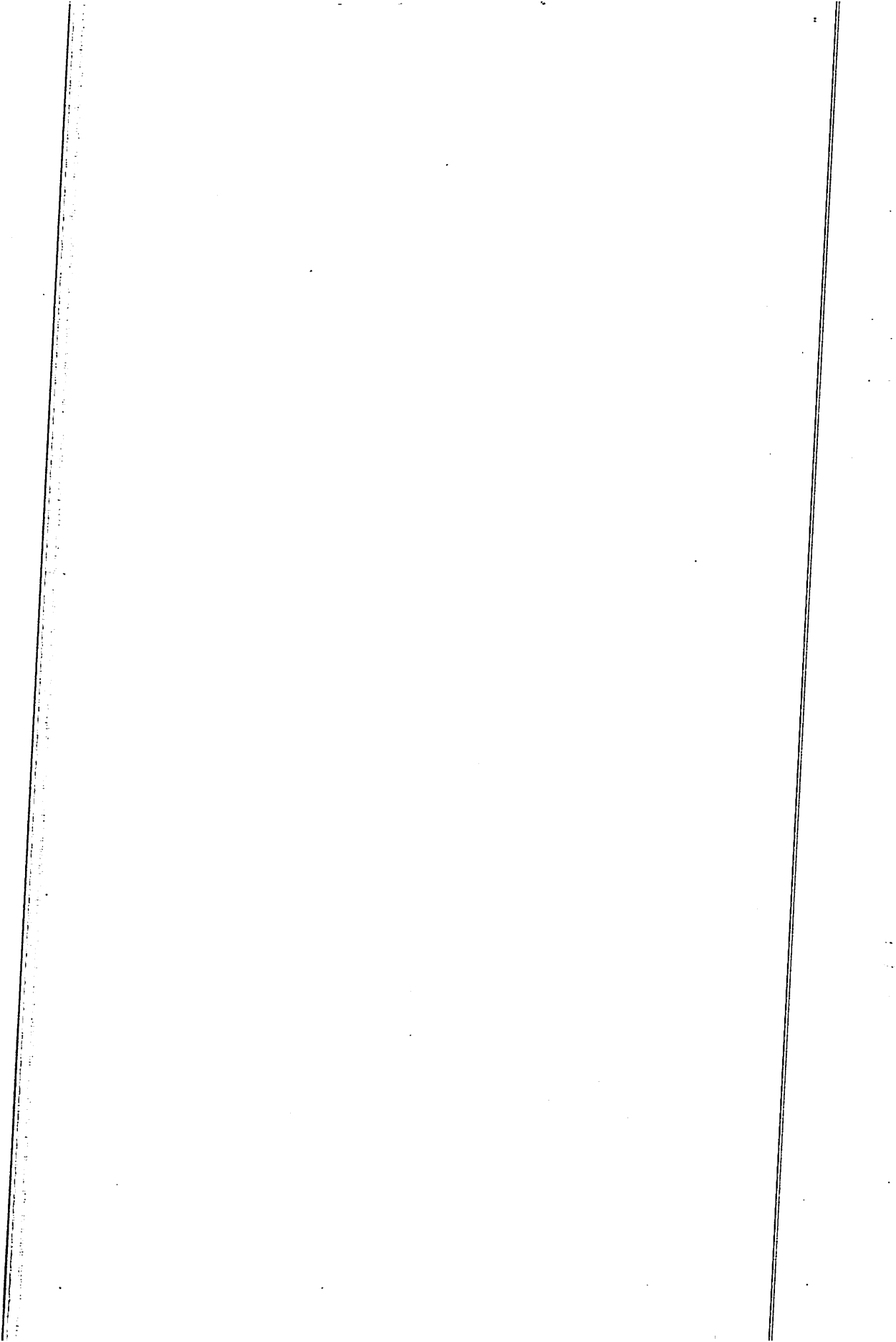
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